

## Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
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R 090635Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6133

S E C R E T BUCHAREST 0115

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR EEWT MASS RO

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR BARNES' MEETING WITH GENERAL COMAN  
RE ROMANIAN REQUEST FOR MILITARY AND SPACE-  
RELATED EQUIPMENT

REF: STATE 287517

1. AMBASSADOR, ACCOMPANIED BY DCM, POLITICAL COUNSELOR AND  
DATT, MET WITH GENERAL-COLONEL ION COMAN JAN 6, 1976. ALSO  
PRESENT WERE COLONEL PETRE CONSTANTIN, ACTING CHIEF OF  
MILITARY FOREIGN LIAISON OFFICE, AND COMMANDER PADURARIU,  
MEMBER OF MILITARY FLO WHO ACCOMPANIED COMAN TO US.

2. AMBASSADOR BRIEFLY REVIEWED THE 1975 RECORD OF EXCHANGES  
BETWEEN US-ROMANIAN ARMED FORCES AND THEIR VALUE TO OUR  
BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP. THIS WAS FOLLOWED BY SOME  
SUGGESTIONS FOR POSSIBLE FUTURE MILITARY EXCHANGES DURING  
1976 (SEPTEL).

3. AMBASSADOR THEN BROACHED MATTER OF ROMANIA'S REQUEST  
FOR MILITARY EQUIPMENT. HE REVIEWED HISTORY OF THIS REQUEST  
BEGINNING WITH GENERAL CIOROIANU'S INITIAL SURFACING OF  
MATTER TO DATT ON MARCH 12, 1975, AT FORT SILL, HIS RE-  
SURFACING OF THE MATTER TO DATT ON JULY 25, 1975, ALONG WITH  
GENERAL-MAIOR ANDREESCU'S REQUESTS FOR SPACE EXPLORATION

ITEMS ON THE SAME DATE, NOTING THAT ARMS AND SPACE CONSTITUTED  
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TWO DIFFERENT QUESTIONS. GENERAL COMAN NODDED AGREEMENT TO

ALL THIS BACKGROUND.

4. DRAWING ON REFTTEL, AMBASSADOR THEN PROCEEDED TO EXPLAIN THE CAREFUL CONSIDERATION WHICH US SENIOR OFFICIALS, INCLUDING SECRETARY KISSINGER, HAD GIVEN TO THE ROMANIAN REQUESTS AND THE US' KEEN AWARENESS OF ROMANIA'S SPECIAL POSITION IN THE WARSAW PACT. TO THIS END, AMBASSADOR EXPLAINED, US GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES HAD DONE EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO DISCOURAGE PUBLIC SPECULATION IN THIS REGARD. AT THIS POINT GENERAL COMAN LAUGHED AND RECALLED AUGUST 1975 PRESS ACCOUNTS OF ROMANIA GETTING 500 US F-5 AIRCRAFT. THIS RIPOSTE REINFORCED THE AMBASSADOR'S NEXT POINT THAT THE US PREFERRED TO HAVE THESE DISCUSSIONS IN BUCHAREST THAN WASHINGTON. GENERAL COMAN AGREED.

5. AMBASSADOR NEXT READ IN ROMANIAN TRANSLATION THE VERBATIM CONTENTS OF PARA 3 REFTTEL, AND THEN ASKED IF GENERAL COMAN WISHED TO COMMENT ON THIS PORTION OF HIS PRESENTATION. THE GENERAL SAID THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE US SIDE HAD GIVEN SYMPATHETIC AND CAREFUL UNDERSTANDING TO THE ROMANIAN REQUEST, THAT THERE WERE VERY SERIOUS OBSTACLES TO MEETING IT AND THAT THE US WAS ASKING FOR A CLEARER RATIONALE FOR THE REQUEST. FOR THE MOMENT, HE WANTED ONLY TO SAY THAT THE ROMANIAN GOVERNMENT HAD MADE THE REQUEST IN THE LIGHT OF ITS EFFORTS TO BECOME MORE SELF-SUFFICIENT IN THE PRODUCTION OF ARMAMENTS. ARMED PERSONNEL CARRIERS WERE ALREADY BEING

CONSTRUCTED, AND BUILDING TANKS DID NOT PRESENT MAJOR PROBLEM, PROVIDED YOU HAD A GOOD ENGINE. ROMANIAN INTEREST WAS IN PART THAT OF DRAWING ON US PRODUCTION EXPERIENCE TO DEVELOP ITS OWN ARMAMENTS INDUSTRY. HE REPEATED THAT HE UNDERSTOOD WHY THE US HAD RESERVATIONS AND SAID HE WOULD WANT TO DISCUSS THE PROBLEM FURTHER SUBSEQUENTLY.

6. AMBASSADOR NEXT ADDRESSED THE ROMANIAN REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE IN THE FIELD OF SPACE EXPLORATION ALONG LINES OF PARAS 4, 5, AND 6 OF REFTTEL. STATING THAT THE SPACE AREA WAS ONE WITH WHICH HE WAS LESS FAMILIAR, GEN COMAN PROMISED TO FILL IN GEN ANDREESCU AND TO SEE THAT WE WERE PROVIDED WITH THE

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INFORMATION WE NEEDED.

7. COMMENT: THE DISUCSSION WAS VERY AMIABLE AND GENERAL COMAN CLEARLY HAD NO PROBLEMS IN UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFICULTIES INVOLVED IN THE US SALE OF ARMAMENTS TO ROMANIA. AMBASSADOR TOLD GEN COMAN HE AND FOREIGN MINISTER MACOVESCU HAD AGREED TO MEET AFTER THE LATTER'S RETURN TO BUCHAREST IN MID-JANUARY TO DISCUSS THIS SAME PROBLEM.

8. DEPT PLEASE PASS DIA.  
BARNES

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NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** Z  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** POLICIES, MILITARY ASSISTANCE, MILITARY PROCUREMENT, MEETINGS, SPACE EXPLORATION  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 09 JAN 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** coburnhl  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976BUCHAR00115  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D760008-0026  
**From:** BUCHAREST  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1976/newtext/t19760173/aaaacmoq.tel  
**Line Count:** 118  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION SS  
**Original Classification:** SECRET  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** EXDIS  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** SECRET  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** EXDIS  
**Reference:** 75 STATE 287517  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** coburnhl  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 03 MAY 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <03 MAY 2004 by woolflhd>; APPROVED <30 AUG 2004 by coburnhl>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** AMBASSADOR BARNES' MEETING WITH GENERAL COMAN RE ROMANIAN REQUEST FOR MILITARY AND SPACE-  
**TAGS:** PFOR, EEWT, MASS, RO, US, (COMAN, ION)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006